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ABSTRACT

This article uses findings from several previous studies to define the kinds of sex stereotyping present in our society. The author considers sex roles as dealt with in children's literature, public schools, advertising, and vocational counseling. He describes, in particular, the situation at an unnamed state university, and cites the woman's traditional role of child-rearer and homemaker as one of the biggest limitations on women's career choice. He declares the public schools and the vocational counseling programs to be of key importance in de-stereotyping our society. (BP)

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SEX STEREOTYPING

Submitted by

Richard G. Rivas

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. The Early Years

A. Elementary

B. Junior High School

C. High School

II. Litigation and Sex Stereotyping

III. Current Thought Concerning Sex Stereotyping

IV. The Federal Concern

V. Sex Stereotyping and Advertising

VI. Blank State University Situation

VII. Summary and Conclusion

VIII. Bibliography

The Early Years

It is the opinion of this writer that sex stereotypes start at a very early stage. According to some authorities, this may be as early as eighteen months of age. While attending school the sexual stereotyping taught in the home by parents, friends, and the culture is perpetuated. According to Helen Gum Westlake,[6] Chairman of the Home Economics Department, York Community High School, Elmhurst, Illinois, sexes do differ--men are more strongly motivated by needs for achievement and sexual gratifications, while women have stronger needs for emotional support from others, for love and security.

Training for sexual stereotyping is exemplified by a recent annotated catalogue of children's books. The books are listed under headings such as the following: Especially for Girls, Especially for Boys. Verbs and adjectives are remarkably predictable through the listing. According to orthodox thought, boys decipher and discover, earn and train; girls struggle, overcome difficulties, feel lost, help solve problems or help someone out.

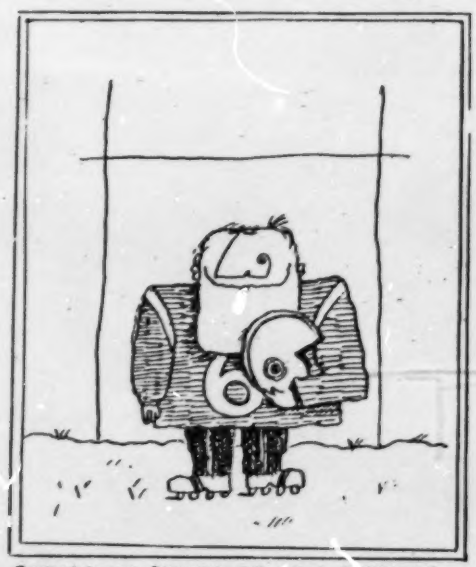
The school and home can do a great deal to prevent sexual stereotyping by providing boys with early enjoyable contacts with the domestic side of life. Adolescent gang concepts generally teach superiority of the male and the requirement of a show of indifference or hostility to pursuits generally followed by girls.

In junior high school sexual stereotyping becomes overt. Curricular sex-typing continues and is extended into subjects as cooking and sewing on the one hand, and metal and woodworking, printing, and ceramics on the other.

It will be the responsibility of public schools to begin to change the images of women in texts and the lives of women students. This expertise from the school seems to be a responsibility that it does not want to accept and take into line because of our patriarchal society. Schools are nothing more than mirrors of society and will not lead in this endeavor.

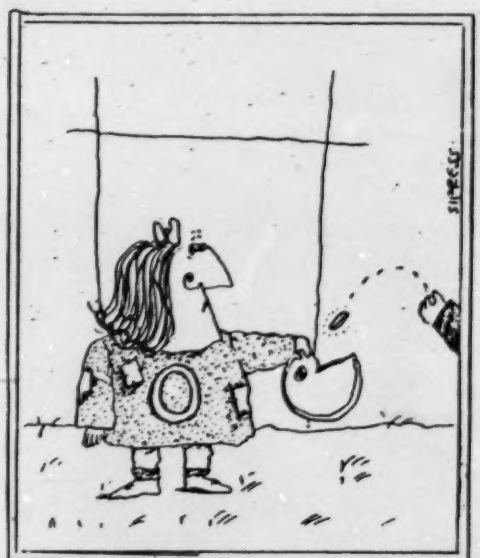
Sexual stereotyping continues in the secondary educational systems, as evidenced by the enrollment patterns of male and female students. According to Dr. Marilyn Steele,[11] 1974, director of Planning and Community Activities for the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation in Flint, Michigan, females tend to be concentrated in four areas. In her study, entitled "Women in Vocational

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
BOY ATHLETE OF THE YEAR



ROCKY SMITH COLLECTED 15 VARSITY LETTERS FOR THE BOYS' TEAMS THIS YEAR AND A FULL ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP TO STATE U.

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
GIRL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR



JUDY JONES COLLECTED $17.30 CENTS FOR THE PURCHASE OF VARSITY LETTERS FOR NEXT YEAR'S GIRLS' TEAMS...

Education", Dr. Steele found schools at all levels were operating different and separate Vocational Education programs for females which contributed to restricted job opportunities and lower earnings for females. She also concluded that although females comprised 55.5 percent of the total Vocational Education enrollments and two-thirds of all secondary vocational enrollments, females still were concentrated in non-wage earning home economics and in health and office occupations. The major findings of her study were as follows:

1. Of the 136 U. S. Office of Education instructional titles, women are a majority in only 33 wage-earning course options. Ninety-seven programs have at least 75 percent of one sex or the other.

2. Consumer and homemaking programs, which do not provide job skills, have 25 percent of female enrollment. Occupational home economics, in which two percent of females in Vocational Education are enrolled, leads to low-paying, dead-end jobs.

3. In post-secondary education, women are concentrated either in technical programs of short duration or in health or office occupations.

4. At the college level, 36 percent of all bachelor's degrees granted to women are in education. Women in education at the bachelor's and master's levels are dispersed widely throughout 44 divisions--except educational administration, physical education, driver and safety education, industrial arts, vocational and vocational-technical, and agricultural education. However, women comprise only 14 percent of total doctorates granted in all disciplines, but only 5.7 percent of doctoral degrees granted in industrial arts, vocational, and Vocational-Technical Education in 1970-71.

5. With women faculty limited to 20 percent of the total in higher education and a paucity of women in school administration, it is apparent that women are not being encouraged to prepare for vocational administration.

6. Female teachers and administrators are more prevalent in the lower grades. The higher the grade level, the fewer the women both in the administration and classroom.

Her major recommendations were:

1. USOE guidelines should be disseminated to enforce Federal laws guaranteeing full equality for female students and staff in education.

2. Additional women must be hired to serve as faculty in departments of school administration and Vocational Education.

3. Teacher education institutions should encourage and prepare more women to enter administration, especially the superintendency.

4. National, State, and local policy and advisory boards should have equal representation of women and men.

5. Home economics and industrial arts should be desegregated by actively recruiting both young women and men for classes.

6. Consumer and homemaking courses should have defined performance competencies enabling both men and women to assume the dual role of homemaker-wage earner.

7. Curricula should emphasize career awareness and exploration and cooperative work experience programs.

8. Educational materials should portray women--and men--in non-traditional roles and occupations.

9. Inservice training programs should be developed to create awareness of sex-role-stereotyping among teacher trainers and practicing teachers.

10. Counselors should increase their knowledge and experience of the work world in order to inform female students about the wide range of job opportunities available, particularly in higher paying, male-intensive occupations.

11. School programs for pregnant teenagers should be mandated to provide open-ended occupational training in entry-level skills as well as child care and development.

12. Adequate day care services should be established for learning and earning mothers.

Litigation and Sex Stereotyping*

The areas of sexism in education which have lent themselves to litigation challenges fall into two categories:

1) the most overt forms of discrimination, such as the exclusion from particular schools, classes, activities, or other educational benefits, and

2) the more subtle form of discrimination evidenced by the use of sexually biased textbooks, guidance counseling females into acceptable programs, differential expenditures of resources on male and female students, and personnel staffing patterns. The overt forms of discrimination, naturally, present the most manageable issues for litigation.

Three successful suits challenging the exclusion of women from elite academic schools have been won in the past few years. The first victory came in a challenge to the total exclusion of women from the University of Virginia, Kirstein V. Rector and Visitors of Virginia, 309 F. Supp. 184 (E. D. Va. 1970). The courts in Kirstein found that the University of Virginia offered educational opportunities unavailable at any other state-supported institution and held that the exclusion of female students from the university on the basis of sex violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The second victory was reached in Broy V. Lee, 337 F. Supp. 934 (D. C. Mass. 1972). The third victory was the Benkelman V. San Francisco school district.

Another area of overt exclusion of women in which there

*Information pertaining to this topic was acquired through the Bibliography entry, Inequality In Education.

has been litigation has been assignment of students to vocational education classes. The real problem in vocational education is not that of exclusion of women but the more insidious counseling and tracking of female students into 'acceptable' vocational programs. The adoption and implementations of the HEW anti-sex discrimination guidelines will hopefully eliminate overt barriers to women in vocational education classes.

The greatest proliferation of sex litigation in education has surrounded the longstanding practice of excluding or discriminating against female students in athletic programs.* Challenges to such discrimination have generally fared well in courts, particularly where the athletic competition involved is a non-contact sport, such as skiing or golfing and where there is no program at all for women students. Some courts have suggested that a separate but equal athletic program would find judicial approval.

One area of overt discrimination against women which has not yet been touched is the distribution of scholarships and awards. In many instances, scholarships are offered to high school students on the basis of sex. Any program supported or sponsored by public schools which allocate opportunities or benefits on the basis of sex should be closely scrutinized to ascertain the underlying legality of the distinctions maintained.

It is much more difficult to deal with the more subtle forms of sex discrimination commonplace in our school system. Even in districts with no overt sex-based policies in curriculum assignment, female students frequently find themselves placed in

*See cartoon, p. 2.

curricula deemed 'acceptable' for girls. Vocational programs leading to high paying blue collar occupations are filled with male students while female students are assigned to secretarial courses. Similarly, in academic curricula female students are assigned to life science wile male students take physics and chemistry.

A manageable target for challenging stereotyped vocational counseling of young women is the commonly used vocational interest test. Guidance counselors use the results of these standardized examinations in determining possible career patterns of students. Some of these tests have sex biases. Test materials with inherent racial biases have been banned from public schools. Larry P. V. Riles, 343 F. Supp. 1306 (N. D. California 1972). Testing materials with sexual biases similarly should be eliminated from school programs.

In conclusion school textbooks and discriminatory allocation of economic resources are other areas which need to be examined. It is unlikely that the public schools' role in perpetuating the biased and stereotypical role of girls and women can significantly change unless women are equally represented in important and visible decision-making positions.

Current Thought Concerning Sexual Stereotyping

The book entitled Emerging Women--Career Analysis and Outlook (1975)[8] identifies and discusses potential roadblocks to women's career development: (1) Women's abilities appear to be different from those of her male counterpart. (2) Attitu-

dinally, women have come to accept the homemaker role as the preferred one or, at best, many women experience conflict in duality of roles (i.e. wife/mother-career). (3) Due to failure on the part of educators and counselors, as well as the popular media, women are not cognizant of the opportunities that are open to them.

According to Mary Allen Jolley (1975),[4]

1) Sex stereotyping is reinforced in education by teachers, in textbooks, in separate classes and single-sexed subjects, and even psychological services reinforce sex role stereotypes.

2) Sex role stereotyping is reinforced by the feminine self-defeat attitude. Women themselves express anti-feminist attitudes.

3) Sex role stereotyping is reinforced by masculine mandates. The single most important factor influencing women's career development seems to be the male. What men, particularly husbands or boy friends, think about women and their roles affects what women do in terms of career planning and implementation.

4) Sex role stereotyping is reinforced by women's work. Occupations are sex-typed.

5) Sex role is reinforced by formal/informal discrimination. There are few support services which assist women's work and careers. Women are generally excluded from the informal channels of communication which are significant to placement and advancement.

6) Sex role stereotyping is reinforced by role overload. Often, women try to reconcile their career aspirations with family role demands by trying to fulfill both roles equally well.

Jolley says, "Sex discrimination is deep-seated and pervasive; the problem is societal in scope. Its elimination calls for a continuous process of change throughout the social order." Because vocational education is uniquely related to the preparation of people for their dual roles--homemakers and wage earners--it can be a cutting edge to re-shape roles and create viable options for various lifestyles for males and females.

What she suggests is:

1) First, we must recognize the sex stereotyping and discrimination that now exists in vocational education as a reflection of society and we must openly admit that it does exist. To defend or deny the existence of sex discrimination in vocational education is to emphasize the reality.

2) Vocational education should develop affirmative action plans to recruit females into so-called non-traditional vocational education programs and to recruit males into home economics. This should be done with an acute awareness of the federal law (Title IX) which, in substance, makes it illegal to do less.

3) Every aspect of the vocational education program should be examined in terms of sex bias--views and attitudes of teachers, teacher educators, counselors and administrators; textbooks; recruitment materials; admission standards, community resources; role of parents and employers; and even attitudes of students themselves. Women should be represented at policy-making levels in vocational education where they are now conspicuously absent. This includes representation on Advisory Councils at state and national levels.

4) Vocational research should give greater attention to all aspects of career development and education in relation to females.

The Federal Concern and Their Approach to Solving Sexual Stereotyping

It was found in the 1973 nationwide study (Prediger, Roth and Noeth) that vocational preferences of more than half of the nation's eleventh grade girls fell in three of 25 job families (education and social services, nursing and human care, and clerical/secretarial work)--job families preferred by only seven per cent of the nation's eleventh grade boys.

The federal agencies are devoting large sums of money to studies of barriers to nontraditional careers and the ways these barriers can be overcome. Publishers are producing textbooks that show men and women in nontraditional work roles. The U. S. Department of Labor has begun to use sex-neutral titles for occupations.

According to Cole,[3] in the absence of appropriate information we must accept one of two hypothesis concerning the

relationship of interests to occupational satisfaction:

1) Social dominance hypothesis: Until the socially accepted activity and choice options of males and females are broadened during the developmental years, the occupations in which males and females will be satisfied (sic) will be restricted to those consistent with their early sex role socialization.

2) Opportunity dominance hypothesis: When socially accepted activity and choice options broaden and nontraditional career opportunities increase, people will find satisfaction in a wider range of occupations, in spite of any limitations imposed by their early socialization.

Sex Stereotyping and Advertising

Advertisers can help through their advertising techniques, but they, too, have been perpetuating sexual stereotyping. Their agencies continue to respond to the profit motive rather than social needs. According to the Butler-Paisley report (1975),[2] change can be brought about by (1) having large organizations such as the National Organization of Women (NOW) approach major advertisers and advertising agencies with suggestions for change; (2) having stockholders demand a more accurate presentation of women; (3) having large organizations boycott products with particularly offensive advertisements; (4) encourage acceptance of recommendations made by the National Advertising Relations Board (NARB); and (5) urging the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to be sensitive to presentations of women in commercials.

In summary it can be stated that sex itself is physical, but becoming a male or female in behavior and aspiration is a complicated social process.

Blank State University Situation*

In the joint requirement of the EEOC Office of Civil Rights, H.E.W., and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance, Department of Labor, sex discrimination can be seen to be running rampant here even at Blank.

For example, in the 9-10 month contract--salaries and number of employees categories--it was noted that at the executive/administrative/management level there were a total of nine, of which all were white males . The salary ranged from a low $16,000 to 30,000 and above. In the faculty category females fared well in the $7,500 to $18,000 range but fell substantially at the $19,000 and above bracket.

As we move down lower into position and salary levels, we find that women and minorities appear in greater numbers. Again, females are overly represented in jobs that have, in the past, been saturated by females.

In the 11-12 month full-time contract categories, the situation on paper seems to get somewhat better. For example, in the executive area the number shifts from 0 females in the 9-10 contract category to 186 males to 21 females. If one wants to call this progress, it would surely have to be a modicum of progress.

As one reads the EEOC Report for 1976 and reads the

*Material taken from "Higher Education Staff Information," (EEOC), Blank State University, 1976.

report with circumspection, the situation worsens until the secretarial/clerical category appears and there we find the majority of females until the $13,000 to 15,999 salary bracket is reached; at that point female employees seem to drop in numbers and are replaced by males. It is surprising to note that the H.E.W. did not find this outrageous but did comment that the goals and timetableswill solve future problems. However, because of the elephantine structure of Blankit will take more than goals and time tables to solve the sexual stereotyping and underutilization of both minorities and women . Another specter which will have a great effect on equalization is the budget crunch. It is a fact that less hiring will take place in the future and that compliance will have to come in the form of good faith efforts, which I'm sure will "please" the female population here at Blank. For a more indepth analysis of the EEOG form the writer advocates that interested parties contact the equal opportunity office and the new Title IX office. Up to date information which is more appalling can be attained through these two sources.

Summary and Conclusion

It is the opinion of the writer that one of the most important influences affecting women's career development and the situation which has influenced her career choice and sexual stereotyping has been her responsibility in the home--for child care and general household activities.

Shared roles of career and household responsibilities for men and women and changes in employment are proposed as facilitating career development for women. Another important factor which affects whether women will be accepted as workers is being of childbearing age. In many instances a woman's career development is currently being strongly influenced by her spouse's career. In the future men's shorter work hours will probably alter his involvement in the household activities. Many role changes may be realized by economic change and the shorter work day. Finally, a sharing of the household responsibilities may be specialized, hopefully by choice and not by sex. The action for the future will be equal opportunity in men's and women's career development with a maturity of respect and a broad sharing of roles.

One of the greatest demands and challenges to our schools and society as a whole is to break free of stereotypes that oversimplify or overgeneralize an uncritical attitude toward anyone, any race, any issue, any institution or event. The aim of education is to free ourselves and our students from rigid thought patterns. In helping students to overcome stereotyped judgments of sex roles, occupations, and career images, we promote democratic ideals in the schools as well as the highest aim of education.

According to Howe[5] taking the status of working women as it now exists, the schools distort reality "by patriarchal attitudes about who should work and the maleness of work." Career educators can and should develop new curricular resources at all learning levels that do not through ignorance or thought-

lessness reinforce sexist standards and sex role stereotypes. Vocational counselors particularly will have to be reeducated and disindoctrinated through in-service remedial programs. Vocational programs must be de-stereotyped from top to bottom.

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